A Synopsis

for the Registration of the Ph D Degree in English

On

NOVEL AS BIOGRAPHY A STUDY OF SELECT NOVELS OF NAYANTARA SAHGAL

Submitted to

THE FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

Swami Ramanand Teerth Marathwada University, Nanded

:By:

MAHADEV NAGNATH TENKALE

Under the Supervision & Guidance of

DR. RAJKUMAR M LAKHADIVE

HEAD & RESEARCH GUIDE, DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH,

MAHATMA BASWESHWAR MAHAVIDYALAYA, LATUR

JANUARY 2015

1. Introduction

Political fiction, as a subgenre of fiction, deals with the political affairs. The political fiction has often used a narrative to give commentary on political events, systems and theories. This type of work is often direct attack on existing society or presents an alternative sometimes fantastic reality. Literature is the reflection of the socio-cultural reality of the given society and an artist being a part of it cannot aloof from the reality of the history. Thus political motif has been very important in indo-English fiction from its beginning.

The pioneers of Indian English fiction, the great trio Mulkraj Anand, Raja Rao and R. K. Narayan were concerned with down trodden of the society, the Indian middle class life and expression of ethos in Indian society. Later writers like K.S. Venkataramani, Kamala Markandya, Bhabani Bhattacharya, Chaman Nahal, Ruth Praver Jhabwala, Arun Joshi, Anita Desai and Khushwant Singh portrayed the social reality of the time.

Nayantara Sahgal is usually considered as an exponent of the political novel. She herself has declared that each of her novels 'more or less reflects the political era we are passing through'. Nayantara Sahgal is the daughter of Vijayalakshmi Pandit and nice of Jawaharlal Nehru naturally had an upbringing in which politics was inevitably a strong ambience. Sahgal's uniqueness lies in her ability in combining the political and domestic themes. In her novels, the personal theme is very artistically woven into the larger political theme making it difficult to separate the one from

other. As a women writer, conscious of her marginalized gender identity, Sahgal's novel also deal with the 'power politics' of the private and domestics world where women are systematically oppressed.

Sahgal's literary world consists of eight novels and two pieces of autobiographies, besides a large number of newspaper and magazine articles. Sahgal's literary career as a novelist spans over a period of thirty years, beginning with her first novel *A Time to be Happy*(1958), followed by *This Time of Morning* (1965), *Strom in Chandigarh* (1969), *The Day in Shadow* (1971), *A Situation in New Delhi* (1977), *Rich like Us* (1985), *Plans for Departure* (1987), and *Mistaken Identity* (1988).

Sahgal's first six novels deals with the chronological accounts of Indian politics from the last phase of freedom struggle to the breakdown of democracy in the mid-seventies. Her last two novels; Plans for Departure and Mistaken Identity are treated as historical novels, even though it is difficult to make a distinction between history and politics. She won prestigious commonwealth writer's prize for *Plans for Departure* in 1987.

Sahgal's first novel *A Time to Be Happy* (1958)set in post-independence India celebrates the concept of 'freedom'. It is the story of the growth and maturation of a young westernized individual Sannad, presented against the backdrop of India's freedom struggle. The dilemma and inner conflicts of Sanad are skillfully integrated to the larger national conflicts. The second novel *This Time of Morning* is a clear illustration of sagal's firsthand knowledge of men and matters of politics, also set in post-independence

faithfully records the trauma of a new born republic passing through great changes.

In *The Storm in Chandigarh* (1969), the third novel of Sahgal, the political background is that of the division of the Panjab into two states of Punjab and Hariyana. It deals with the strom that is brewing both in public and private domains. The Day in Shadow (1971) records the erosion of values both in public and private worlds. It depicts the political scenario of the late 60's with its belligerent new politicians. A Situation in New Delhi (1977) set in the 60's deals with the frustration and alienation of the younger generation against the background of unethical politics. *Rich like Us* (1985) is Sahgal's best novel portraits a picture of India during 1975-76, the period her cousin Indira Gandhi declared a state of national emergency and assumed absolute power for about twenty months. The theme of the novel is power and its varied manifestations like violence, tyranny and totalitarianism.

2. Objectives of the present study

1 To study Nayantara Sahgal's novel as a political biography.

2 To apply the biographical approach to study of Nayantara Sahgal's novel.

3 To throw light on political elements reflected in the selected novels of Nayantara Sahgal.

4 To study the fictional techniques of Nayantara Sahgal.

2. Hypotheses

1 Nayantara Sahgal is a political writer besides a feminist, a Gandhi an and writer of social documentaries.

2 The central motif in Sahgal's fiction- the human being is political being but the forces which shapes human character is religion, culture, upbringing power and absence of it and experience.

4. Relevance of the Study

The study of this kind is certainly going to be a great use for modern society. The present study will help the reader to understand the political history of Indian politics. The detailed study throws light on various aspects of politics. It also makes awareness about the politics how it is structured and framed after the post-independence. The study will change the attitude of the learner towards the politics and will help and create the interest for the new arrivals in politics.

5. Research Methodology

Since the present research work is descriptive, argumentative, analytical and explorative in nature the following methodology adopted will be one of descriptive, explorative, analytical and interpretative. The study material will comprise primary texts and secondary sources related to the concerned field. The investigation would be initiated with an in depth study of primary sources.

The secondary sources will be used for arriving at a definite conclusion. The present research also requires journals, books, anthologies and interviews.

6. Chapter scheme:

The present research study is divided into Six chapters as follows:

1 Chapter I:

The first chapter is of Introduction. It deals with the brief thematic history of Indian English novel from the beginning of Indian English novel writing to the time of Nayantara Sahgal.

2 Chapter II: Novel as a political biography

In this chapter the concept of political biography is elaborated and the history and development of political biography until the period of Nayantara Sahgal is focused.

3 Chapter Third

In this Chapter, the first two selected novels *A Time to be Happy* (1958), *This Time of Morning* (1965) will be studied from the concerned aspect.

4 Chapter Four

In this Chapter next two novels *Strom in Chandigarh* (1969), *The Day in Shadow* (1971) will be focused on from the angle of political novel.

5 Chapter Five:

The last two novels *A Situation in New Delhi* (1977), *Rich like Us* (1985) will be dealt with in this chapter from the same angle as considered above.

6 Conclusuon:

On the base of above said discussion the conclusion will be drawn out in this chapter.

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MAHADEV TENKALE
Research Scholar

DR. RAJKUMAR LAKHADIVE
Research Supervisor